

Assam models shining in MTV



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Syed Miraz Ahmed 22 July 2016 Updated 22 Jul 28027 views

Syed Miraz Ahmed chanced to chat up with two lively young models from Assam who made it to the Top [10](#) at the ongoing [India's Next Top Model Season 2](#), setting their own benchmarks and thereby becoming role models for many in the region.

MTV [launched](#) the second season of [India](#)'s Next Top Model on July [10](#). The Indian version of the CBS sensation 'America's Next Top Model' created by Tyra Banks was [launched](#) in [India](#) last year by license holder and producer Bulldog Media & Entertainment. Following on the heels of massive appreciation for the first season, the fashion franchisee is on [TV](#) with feisty young models for [India](#)'s Next Top Model Season [2](#) (INTMS2) every Sunday, [7](#) pm.

In the hunt to find [India](#)'s Next Top Model, the fashion-packed runway has some of [India](#)'s fresh faces being mentored by the best in the industry. Sensational fashionista, model and actress, Lisa Haydon and ace photographer, Dabboo Ratnani return [as](#) judges to the show this season along with MTV and Fashion maven Anusha Dandekar and grooming expert Neeraj Gaba [as](#) the mentors counseling the young talents in their hunt for [India](#)'s Next Top Model. Of the thirteen new faces, [ten](#) are now vying for the coveted title this season.

IN CONVERSATION



JANTEE HAZARIKA, 22

[India](#)'s Next Top Model Season [2](#) contestant

Studied fashion designing at Vogue Institute of Fashion, Bengaluru

Syed: You've made it to the Top [10](#) contestants at [India](#)'s Next Top Model Season [2](#) on MTV. You have set a precedent. How does it feel ?

Jantee: I was working very hard to get into this. [As](#) a girl from the northeast it was a problem for me. Working so hard, being confident, I'm blessed by the elders with their support. "I'm in the top [10](#) and it makes me proud." My parents, cousins and friends are with me and are proud of me.

Syed: You studied fashion designing and ended up modelling yourself. Why?

Jantee: [As](#) a child I was more into studies and that's how I ended up studying fashion designing. It was during my fifth semester and [as](#) in all fashion designing schools we always had fashion shows. I modeled for my class fellows.

Same time around my mother called me asking me to audition for Miss Northeast Diva 2014. She was of the view that the whole experience will make me learn something. I was reluctant at first but later agreed with her. I went to Guwahati and groomed myself hard, gave the auditions and ultimately won the pageant. The same year I was among the top [ten](#) finalists at the Femina Miss [India](#) 2014 contest. I was adjudged Miss Fashion Icon and Miss Photogenic. Back in Bangaluru I resumed modelling again. I also featured in the March 2015 edition of *Grazia*.

Modelling just happened. "I like the ramp, the photoshoots and specially when people shower compliments." It is because of modelling that I'm proud of my skin more than before. I used to be very uncomfortable of my dusky complexion all through school and college. "People made fun of me and I began to feel that may be I actually wasn't good looking."

But after I began modelling, fashion photographers started complementing my dusky complexion. This however, became a turning point for my life and helped me overcome a number of hurdles.

"I think I'm happy modelling."

Syed: Do you think you have a great mileage [over](#) others for having studied fashion designing and then being a model yourself, understanding well the nuances of both the mediums?

Jantee: Ummnn...I [don't](#) think so I have more advantage [over](#) others because this time all the [girls](#) are so good. Everyone has something good about them and are good in their own way and are working pretty hard at it.

Syed: Fashion designers make clothes for a model and here you are a model. Don't you think it is a good match?

Jantee: Yes, it does match somehow because whenever I go for a fashion photoshoot and there is styling going on and if there is something in my mind, I go ahead and suggest it to the photographer concerned. I think this helps me a lot. I suggest thinking what would go best if I was working on my model. My ideas are adopted.

Syed: How hard did you work for this season of [India's](#) Next Top Model?

Jantee: Last season at INTP 1 there was Gloria Tep from [Nagaland](#). It's good that INTP is focusing on [girls](#) from the northeast and I thought I should go audition for it. I shifted to Mumbai, saw the casting calls and went for the audition. I was a little bit on the healthier side and in modelling lean, toned up looks are in demand. I went back home to Guwahati for the Bihu festivities. Ultimately, I did not receive a call and decided to try my luck come Season [2](#).

I genuinely started working out hard for [as](#) much [as](#) two hours a day and sometimes twice a day to tone up my body. Finally, when the second auditions for Season [2](#) came up, I participated. I spoke my [heart](#) out since I had nothing to fake about and I was selected.

The mentors are extremely helpful and supportive throughout, each one of them, whether its Lisa Haydon, Neeraj Gaba or Daboo Ratnani. I worked out hard to tone myself because of Lisa Haydon. She is a goddess. She is very gorgeous. When I see her in front of me, I just go numb. She is so stylish that everyday is like a fashion cover. I look at her clothes and think I wish I had the same clothes.

Syed: Who and what inspires you most?

Jantee: The one person that inspires me most is my mother. It's she who pushed me into modelling. She is very supportive, no matter what whether it be about reminding me of my photoshoot schedules or any minute matter. On the other hand having studied design, everytime I go out, I see things around me, I get inspired. I think of it, I write, even sketch and design.

Syed: Northeast has produced dozens of models and actors who made it pretty good in the national and international arena. Anybody among them you look up to?

Jantee: Moni Kangana Dutta. A number of people have compared me with her. Modelling was different during her time in 2007/2008. I heard she had issues [over](#) her complexion and hair. How she overcame all of that indeed inspires me. I look up to Dipannita Sharma also. She too is a gorgeous dusky woman. Being dusky, being born [as](#) one is not easy. These two women inspire me a lot.

Syed: What other things do you do apart from modelling?

Jantee: I'm a sportsperson. My mother always wished I was a boy. I play cricket.

If not modelling, I would have been designing or opened an [NGO](#) for animals because I really do feel for them. I have two dogs, two cats at home and I'm gonna adopt more.

Syed: I hear you can handle big situations with ease. How would you exercise your confidence and patience during, God-forbid, an unfortunate disaster situation in Assam? Guwahati sits on Zone V you see.

Jantee: Yes, when it comes to me I'm a strong person but I [don't](#) think I'll be in my senses if a disaster hits Assam, because my family stays there. My family is scattered. My mother lives alone in Guwahati, my [father](#) works in [Arunachal](#) Pradesh and my sister lives in [Morigaon](#). Every night I panic thinking of a predicament. What will happen, what will I do if an earthquake hits.

Whenever earthquake strikes Assam, my mother calls me telling that if she succumbs to it, I must take care of myself. Hundred many things come to my and I [don't](#) know how if at all, I'll come to terms with it in such a situation.

But if I'm with my parents, obviously I'll be very strong. I'll help them and the dogs downstairs someplace safe and do other things.

If I'm there with them, I'll be strong but if I'm far away, I'm gone.

Syed: Do you think that the personal and professional side to a person are one and the same thing? Yes/No & Why?

Jantee: No. Both are totally different. The conduct of a person in both the situations vary. In my case its so. I have seen people who wear the same cap and are the same in both their personal and professional lives. I am totally a different case. [One](#) might be utterly surprised to find my fun and realxed side at a personal [level](#) comapred to my professional behavior.

Syed: What does Freedom of Speech mean to you?

Jantee: The ability to speak one's mind. To speak the truth.

Syed: How do you define [success](#)?

Jantee: [Success](#) is happiness. When one's parents are happy that's [success](#).

Syed: What do you aim for in life?

Jantee: My first aim in life is to become a model in [India](#). I'd like to go international given a chance. Secondly, I would want take the cause of animals further [as](#) I mentioned earlier which is a dream and an aim too. Once, I become a supermodel, I'll earn a lot of money. I'll buy land in acres for animals, for those abandoned, hurt and used in laboratories.

Syed: What's your favorite food item?

Jantee: Staple [Assamese](#) cuisine tops it all. This is what I have come to conclude after my stay in Bangalore. I also like dumplings like Momos, apparently all Indian street food not to forget the classical Biryani, the likes [found](#) in Hyderabad and occasional continental spreads. But [Assamese](#) cuisine obviously come in first.



Jantee



RAJASHREE SINGHA, 21

[India](#)'s Next Top Model Season [2](#) contestant

Final year [student](#) of Sociology at Mithibai College, Mumbai

Syed: Tell me something 'bout yourself. Your childhood and your experience with modelling.

Rajashree: I was born in Guwahati and raised in Mumbai. I'm a fun loving person and studying Sociology at Mithibai College. I have also trained in Bharat Natyam for five years and other [dance](#) forms. Eversince, I was a kid I was interested in modelling. That's how I am at INTMS2 now in my final year of graduation. I started modelling about four months ago and now you see me on [TV as](#) one of the contestants.

Syed: What has been your experience with modelling at INTMS2 ?

Rajashree: It is a very different and amazing experience. I have learnt a lot here at INTM. It has given me a great exposure. People know me now and I've got a great fan following. You'll see me walking for Manish Malhotra show in the next episode that is coming up on Sunday July 24. He has complemeted me. He actually likes my features and would like to audition me for one of his shows. That's what he said.

Syed: What is that you think you have in you that got you where you are now at INTMS2?

Rajashree: I have a great passion for my [career](#), the right attitude, I'm sensible with a positive outlook. That all helps me to grow better and better and that's what got me here.

Syed: How do you position yourself among the other contestants at the prestigious INTMS2?

Rajashree: Everyone is different in their own way. Everyone is beautiful in their own way. When it comes to me I have a beautiful body among the other contestants, a pale skin, oriental features. Since, I am passionate about my goal, I would do anything to win, the challenges in the show or anything.

Syed: How has been your fan following?

Rajashree: I have been getting messages not just from Assam, but from [Bangladesh](#), Dubai, [Manipur](#), [Nagaland](#) and others. I am very glad that I am like an inspiration for them [as](#) they say. They have assured their support. My fan following has gone to another [level](#).

Syed: You are among the best in the industry. What have you opportuned to learn from the mentors in the show?

Rajashree: They are extremely supportive. They are just the way you see on [TV as](#) mentors Once backstage they counsel and groom us for betterment to be able to face new challenges.

Syed: How do you define [success](#) at this point having said that it has been just four months for you to have started modelling and now that you are at INTM?

Rajashree: Anything that one wants doesn't come easy. Success is achieved by a lot of hard work and what one puts in, dedication towards one's goal, ability to accept and learn from one's experiences. The modelling industry offer different jobs everyday. I have worked with many different people. There are different kinds of personalities one [meets](#), different types of photographers. [One](#) must be able to accept every personality type and not differ with photographers and try become overconfident in the process. That does not work in this industry. [One](#) must be confident about oneself and at the same time also comply with the vision of the photographer [as](#) well.

Syed: How hard did you work to get into INTM?

Rajashree: I worked hard to get into shape, going to the gym regularly, exercising to stay fit and toned. I ate a lot of healthy food avoiding junk fares. Though I am a foodie and eat a lot, i had to make compromises to get through the levels during the auditions to the show and finally into the house. Also, watching different fashion videos on YouTube helped me immensely. Ramp walks and ramp shows internationally are quite different from what we have in [India](#). This really helped me into the show. I learnt how to carry myself and walk right.

Syed: What is your aim in life? How have you set yourself 5 years down the line?

Rajashree: I want to be a supermodel. I want to go international and walk for the Milan Fashion [Week](#). My wish since I was a teenager is to become Victoria's Secret Fashion Show model. I wish I get there.

Syed: Are there any Indian models or northeast Indian models who inspire you?

Rajashree: I am inspired by Ujwala Raut [as](#) an Indian model who walked for Victoria's Secret Fashion Show. Also, Ketho Leno Kense, a supermodel from [Nagaland](#) has been a great inspiration for me.

Girls from northeast [India](#) are actually coming up. It was great news for me when I heard that Lakmé Fashion [Week](#) auditioned in Guwahati this time. Girls are coming up now. I am glad to be one of them and I hope I inspire them.

Syed: What would be your message to aspiring models?

Rajashree: Be your 'self.' Give a deaf ear to what others say and tease you about.

Syed: What's your food craving?

Rajashree: That would be Chinese. I like Momo (dumplings) too. I like cooking and *pasta al ajillo* is my favorite. When I'm in the mood it'll be either Chinese or Italian.



Rajashree

Send your comments, questions to: editor@assamtimes.org

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Writes, edits and researches. In 2013 he was conferred the Rotary International District 3240 Young Achiever Award for his work in the area of environment and digital journalism. In 2006 he was awarded first in the category of Wildlife Photography by the Department of Environment & Forests and Tourism, Government of Assam.

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